

NEWS RELEASE

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Mattoon Police Department Receives Equitable-sharing Funds from Prosecution of Omega Trust and Trading Investment Scheme

Mattoon, Illinois -- The United States Attorney and the U.S. Marshal for the Central District of Illinois today presented the Mattoon, Illinois Police Department with \$555,079 in equitable-sharing proceeds from the investigation and prosecution of the Omega Trust and Trading international investment fraud scheme. U.S. Attorney Jan Paul Miller and U.S. Marshal Steven D. Deatherage presented the check to Larry Metzelaars, Mattoon Police Chief, with Mayor Charles E. White and former police chief Joe Plummer. The money, along with \$85,000 previously presented, represents the Mattoon Police Department's share to-date of proceeds from the sale of seized and forfeited assets acquired by Clyde Hood and his associates in the Omega Trust and Trading scheme.

Through the Department of Justice's Asset Forfeiture program, the U.S. Marshals Service is responsible for the management and disposal of seized and forfeited property, which in this case included various pieces of real estate in the Charleston and Mattoon area, bank accounts, and vehicles. Through victim restitution proceedings, the U.S. Attorney's Office petitioned the Department of Justice and was granted approval to allow payment of \$1,697,310 in court-ordered restitution from forfeited property to 355 victims who sought restitution of the moneys they invested in the scheme. Funds from the sale and disposition of remaining properties have been forwarded to the Department of Justice's Asset Forfeiture Fund for equitable sharing among the law enforcement agencies which participated in the case investigation to support and enhance law enforcement operations.

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U.S. Attorney Miller said, “The Omega Trust and Trading fraud and money laundering case has had a lasting impact on the Mattoon community. It is fitting that some of the proceeds of the money laundering can be returned to the community to support and enhance future law enforcement operations.”

The court record reflects that Clyde Hood , age 71, of Mattoon, Illinois, is currently serving a 14-year sentence in the custody of the federal Bureau of Prisons. In April 2001, Hood pled guilty to mail/wire fraud conspiracy, money laundering conspiracy, and filing a false tax return. Hood admitted that during the course of the scheme, from 1994 to August 2000, he and his co-conspirators deceived investors by making excuses for payout delays, while admonishing investors of the need for complete secrecy and providing overriding assurance that their big payout was imminent.

Though a number of the 19 defendants prosecuted in this case were not charged with the fraud scheme, they were convicted for their role in facilitating the money laundering of the proceeds of the fraud. Those who “invested” in Omega Trust and Trading were promised a 50-to-one return on their original investment within 275 days; however, Hood and his co-defendants used the money to finance real estate purchases, businesses, no-interest loans to friends and relatives, and for their personal living expenses.

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